



# CONNECTIONS

the newsletter of the Connecticut Romance Writers Association  
Romance Writers of America, Region One, Chapter One



## President's Letter

I love television.

After years of swearing I'd never do it, I finally signed up on an online dating website. On this particular site, participants have a lot of space to write essays about themselves. In order to make more accurate "matches," participants can also answer questions and take personality tests. Reading the profiles which the site has chosen as the best matches for me, it seems like a lot of the men claim that they seldom or even never watch television. Some go on to say that their ideal partner wouldn't watch much TV either.

I'm in trouble.

According to a report by the U.S. Census Bureau, the average American watches about 34 hours of TV a week. I sat down and figured out how much watch on average, and was relieved to find out that, even though I probably watch more TV than I should, I'm still on the lower half of the bell curve. But, even so, I like to tell myself that I watch TV for more than purely entertainment purposes.

I watch it to hone my craft.

Okay, you're right. I watch television to be entertained. But, as a writer, most of the shows I watch actually do teach me something about writing, or at least I try to tell myself that. To test this theory, I made a list of my favorite shows and then tried to figure out what, as a writer, I can learn from each one.

I had a hard time getting into **Mad Men**, because the characters aren't especially sympathetic, but I eventually got hooked. Maybe that's the whole point. But the real lesson of Mad Men is subtext. The dialogue is as much about what is *not* said as what *is* said.

For a less subtle example of morally ambiguous characters that we nevertheless love, watch **Sons of Anarchy** or, if you've got Showtime, the delicious **Dexter**.

If you want a lesson in how to maintain character voice during narrative, listen to the voiceovers in **Burn Notice**. "When you're being chased down an alley by six thugs with automatic weapons, it's important to remember that..." Brilliant!

Sexual tension done right? I choose **Castle** and, to a lesser degree, **Bones**. I think the Bones writers overplay their hand a bit—I'd buy the sexual tension more if the supporting characters weren't constantly harping on it.

I know that **Two and a Half Men** is the most popular sitcom on television, but I don't especially like the main characters. However, for secondary characters that are memorable, even when their on-screen appearances are brief, I refer you to Britta (the maid) and Evelyn (the mother).

I'm enjoying a new show called **Rubicon**. I like the multi-layered complexity of the conspiracy theory, but I'm also liking the way that I can't tell which characters are good guys and which are the bad guys. For you mystery writers? Watch how subtly they insert the hints and then trust their viewers to grasp the significance.

Sue on **Glee** a wonderful example of a villain that you can love to hate.

Sometimes, when there are a group of characters in a story that are about the same age, live in the same place, and have similar socio-economic situations, their voices seem to blend together. Not so on **Desperate Housewives**.

If you'd like to see an example of how to rip a story from the headlines and weave a complex work of fiction around it, check out **The Good Wife**.

When I'm wondering what a teen is supposed to look and talk like, I watch an episode of **Gossip Girl** (even though the actors playing the supposed teens are all at least twenty-four).

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**NEXT MEETING:**  
**October 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Jane Goodger Tells All**

**See page 2 for details.**



## REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

**Resuming August 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**Holiday Inn, North Haven**

Critique Group: 9:30  
General Meeting: 10:45-11:15  
Craft Corner  
Lunch  
Speaker 12:45  
Hands-On Workshop  
(after the speaker)

## CALENDAR



**October 9<sup>th</sup>**

### Reinventing Your Career for Success in Publishing.

Author Jane Goodger got off to a great start with her debut novel, but inexplicably found her career taking a wrong turn. She found a way to reinvent her career and survive the ups and downs of a professional writing career. Don't miss it, guys!

### Hands-On Workshop...Finding the Holes in Your Plot.

You know you have a solid idea, but it's just not coming together. Or, you think it's pretty solid, except for that one big turning point you just can't figure out. We'll break into small groups and discuss each synopsis (5 pages, 12 points TR, double spaced). You must sign up for this in advance! Contact Kristan at [k.higgins@snet.net](mailto:k.higgins@snet.net) if you're interested.

**November 6<sup>th</sup>**...Do you believe in ghosts? A very unique presentation by Tracy Timbro, whose will discuss the paranormal, messages from the dead, mediums as portrayed on television and in the movies.

## Chapter News

### All-Day Workshop!

**Empowering Characters' Emotions** by Margie Lawson is hailed as one of the best writing workshops out there. If you haven't already registered for the class, please do so. If you volunteered in our contest or at the conference, you can come for free! The \$60 member rate includes both breakfast and lunch. Take advantage of this incredible opportunity to move your writing to the next level.

### Contest

**The Write Stuff Contest** is now accepting entries, and we hope all eligible CTRWA members will consider entering. It's a great way to get feedback on your work...and possibly, give you a springboard to getting *The Call*. This year, we have an exceptional lineup of final round judges, and the top entries in each category will be placed in front of editors and agents who have been aggressively acquiring in those categories.

**Call for First Round Judges.** At CTRWA, we have a mission: To promote the writing careers of our members. The Write Stuff Contest is our only annual fund-raiser and allows us to do the things we do for you. But, for the contest to be a success, we need your help. If you have not yet signed up to be a first-round judge, please do so by visiting our webpage at [www.CTRWA.org](http://www.CTRWA.org) and clicking on **The Write Stuff** link at the top of the page.

## MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **Patti Cavaliere** for First Place for her children's fiction, *THE SECRET OF THE SHACK*. Woot woot!...**Paula Sharon** has done the impossible—she's written a first draft in 2 months! Clearly, selling her soul to the devil was worth it, because revisions are going well, too. Full speed ahead, Paula!...**Gerri Brousseau** got a request for a complete from Tracy Martin at Harlequin! And that's not all; she got an invitation to submit to an agent!...**Huntley Fitzpatrick's** agent has her manuscript out at four publishing houses, and Huntley is trying hard not to panic. Good news: the broken foot is healing!...**Rhonda Lane** sent in 15 pages to be critiqued at the New England Crime Bake...**Kristan Higgins** has finished outlining her eighth novel and is trying not to weep at the thought of another first draft...**Linda Avellar** is now RWA PRO—enjoy the wealth of information they offer, Linda!...**Paula Robinson** is plugging away at her WIP; there've been some good writing days and some not-so-good writing days, but she's still at it!...**Kathy Albert** is on a paranormal kick this fall: going to see Lorraine Warren at the Mark Twain Museum and Ghost Hunters Live at the Warner Theater in Torrington.... **Karlee Etter** was asked by one agent and one editor to submit partials. In addition, Karlee was invited to Guest Blog about Victorian women's fashions and women at sea during the Victorian era (dates still to be determined)...Happy 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary to **Laurie Nichols** and her hubby! Hope you're keeping the romance alive...**Jennifer Fusco's** wonderful commercial was on Monday Night Football! If you haven't seen it yet, check it out!

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qO7lKaAB5Dg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qO7lKaAB5Dg)

"Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up."

—Anne Lamott



## Member of the Month...Judy Roth

*Though her presence isn't seen enough at our chapter meetings, Judy's energy and good cheer always make themselves felt when she's able to attend. Judy gave us a few minutes of her time to tell us more about her writing thus far.*

Tell us about what you're working on now.

I am revising a 55,000 word manuscript in hopes of giving it more depth and in the process filling it out to fit the single title category.

What's the next major step you need to take in your writing?

There are two – at least. One thing I need to do is dig deeper into my characters' pasts. By the time I start writing, I know their likes and dislikes, their fashion sense (or lack there of), their eating and spending habits, but sometimes I don't know where or even if they went to college. If it's not in the story, I just sort of forget about it. I'm learning I need to take the time to write an autobiography for the main characters to fill in those holes. I mean, what if my heroine, now in her early thirties, ran into her college bo at a cocktail party, (yes, the very one who deflowered her on the squash court freshman year) and not only had she no memory of him but no recollection of attending the institution. Yikes, we'd all miss out on an intriguing visual and I'd obviously have to haul her off to a very different sort of institution. Then where would my happy ending be?

I also need to be much better about researching agents and editors, getting out those queries and pitching. Ugh!!! Gives me a stomach ache just thinking about it.

What have been some of the highs of your romance writing thus far?

I really enjoyed writing the manuscript I'm currently tidying up. I liked the characters and it was fun hanging out with them. As icing on the cake, an agent actually responded to my query, asked for three chapters and then the full. Of course the cherry on top would have been nice but...

What are some good books you've read lately?

A while back I found a book written by a classmate of mine, Isabel Sharpe called *Women on the Edge of a Nervous Breakthrough*. Very smart, very funny. Made me wish I'd spent more time with her in high school. *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett was timely in my life and well written. *My Name is Nujook, Age 10 and Divorced* by Nujook Ali was heartbreaking and inspirational. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and the next two novels by Stieg Larsson were pure entertainment. I wish I had half Lisbeth's chutzpah, and a healthy chunk of Larsson's character *Connections* Volume 9

development. Last night I began *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave. I hate to recommend a book before I finish it, but thus far it sure has my attention.

Favorite authors and why?

There are so very many. F. Scott Fitzgerald. My dad used to read me his short stories. Robert B. Parker. Back in the day, my friends and I couldn't get enough Spencer. Anna Quindlen because she gets the mom factor. I will buy anything by the quirky and insightful Steve Martin. I really like good memoirs. Augusten Burroughs is amazing, as is his brother, John Elder Robison who wrote about life with asperger's. Nora Roberts because she makes it all look so freakin' easy (yes, I do hate her for the same reason) and Judy Blume because she's Judy Blume.

Favorite Connecticut restaurant?

Sally's (not Pepe's) and hibachi at Kampai in Branford. It never gets old watching a kid's eyes light up as fire shoots from an onion or a shrimp tail lands in his shirt pocket. For dress up, heels and the hubby, it's Tre Scalini in New Haven.

If you could cast your current hero or heroine, who'd get the call?

You know, I'm wanting to think outside the box here, but the truth is, even though I conceived this heroine before Amy Adams was really on my radar, she'd be perfect, and if a certain George would quit getting older or I could write faster he'd do in a pinch.



### From *Having It All* by Judy Roth

"I think there's eggplant in your hair." He reaches toward her. She jumps back as if stung, swats at the offending object tangled in her curls.

# Newbie's Guide to Literary Terms

by Shawntelle Madison

EVERY WRITER HAS to start somewhere, and writing fiction can be intimidating enough with fellow writers tossing around literary terms like candy on Halloween. Sometimes you can see what's in the wrapping, while most of the time you have no idea what's within. Let's delve into a few of these terms: Narrative, Exposition, Introspection, Plot Device, Deus Ex Machina

I retrieved a few of my terms from the Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary. The first term we'll look at is the narrative. That one relates to the whole picture. It's defined as:

narrative: "an account, story, or tale"

When you write a story, you create a narrative. The narrative is an account of the journey your protagonists (hero/heroine) and antagonists (villain, death, etc) undertake.

Let's look at the term exposition. This relates to how you convey your information. Your voice conveys to the reader what's in the narrative. Of course, like the narrative, you can mess up the exposition as well. Have you ever given so much back story that a crit partner knew the color of your character's underwear? Well, they might've said you gave an information dump or an exposition dump.

Formally, exposition is defined in the dictionary as: "the act of presenting, explaining, or expounding facts or ideas."

As authors, the exposition for us is the dialogue, description through imagery, etc. that gives the audience the background of the characters and the present situation.

So anytime someone says there's a problem with your exposition, you can elegantly extend your pinky finger in the air and tell them you'll correct it no problem. (Just make sure to ask for a specific page and paragraph since you'll likely have a lot to crawl through.)

Our exposition can go too far. Have you ever read a book where you got bored, couldn't wait to put it down? Perhaps the author included too much description. Or they had a never ending flashback or talked about every dog the character had since childhood. Details are nice, but like the next topic below, it should be used enough to convey the story and advance the plot.

Our next topic is introspection. Via our dictionary, introspection is defined as:

introspection: "The observation and analysis of one's own mental processes and emotional states."

In essence, introspection is when your character reacts or thinks about something that has occurred. It's important when using introspection to not give too much or too little. For example, if your villain just left your heroine in the middle of the nowhere with no ride, I doubt she will have one line or two of introspection. There will likely be some dialogue (cursing), a visceral reaction (anger), and then

some introspection on what has occurred and how she feels. Introspection is a valuable tool for romance writers.

Now we come to the plot device. Have you ever been told by a crit partner that you used something in your story as plot device? Perhaps you pulled a Deus Ex Machina out of thin air? How about we define these two terms together?

plot device: a character or object in the story that is only used to advance the plot.

deus ex machina: a plot device where the story's conflict is resolved through something that is not related to the story in any way. Also known as the "hand of God."

Based on the definitions given above, you can see these should be avoided in your manuscript. It's far too easy to use these our plots. For example, it would be too easy to let the heroine I described above find a car running and ready a few feet away from where the villain ditched her. The car is a smaller form of Deus Ex Machina. A larger example would be if our heroine confronted the villain at his house. While in a knife fight, we might learn that the hero hid at the house the whole time and he comes bounding out of the attic to fight the villain and save the day. Way too easy! Why not have the heroine save herself in a battle to the death?

How do you avoid plot devices? If something is critical to making your story work, it should be fully ingrained in your plot. If you have a magical necklace that saves the day, give the necklace a history. Foreshadow it. Make the object a more active part of your story. There are ways to surprise the reader in the end without giving them the "cringe effect."

Cringe Effect: When a crit partner reads your work, cringes, and moans, "Oh, c'mon that came out of nowhere!"

Check out Shawntell's Synopsis Wizard and GMC Wizard at [www.shawntellemadison.com/writer-tools](http://www.shawntellemadison.com/writer-tools)

## President's Letter, continued

For tips on how to construct a large, varied cast of characters, try **Grey's Anatomy**. I watch **The Mentalist** for inspiration. Okay, not writing inspiration, *personal* inspiration. Besides, my fiancé, Simon Baker, would be disappointed if I were not prepared to discuss recent episodes over breakfast.

See? I'm not a couch potato. I'm *educating* myself.

Are you buying this? Good.

But, then, tell me...what's my excuse for watching

**Survivor?**

See you at the next meeting...

~ Toni

## How to Give an Effective Presentation

By Jennifer Fusco, CTRWA Member

SINCE JOINING CTRWA and RWA, I've had the privilege of sitting through many presentations on character, career and craft taught by some of the best names in the business. Some have been extremely valuable and I've written every word down on top of the handouts the speaker presented. Others left me making grocery lists in my head.

In business, you learn (mostly through baptism by fire) how to give effective presentations. Early on in my career, a manager stood up during one of my presentations, rolled his hand through the air and told me to *get on with it*. Painful as it was at the time, not only did I get on with it, after years of practice; I compiled my list of effective presentation tips so you can *get on with it* too.

**1. Carefully plan your presentation around one “take home” message.** Craft the take home message by answering a few basic questions such as: Is the purpose of the presentation to motivate, to persuade or simply to convey information. Keep the “take home” message simple and easy to remember.

**2. Talk to your audience, don't read to them.** Tough one when you're an author. You are proud of your work (and so are we) and we know authors want to share their stories with everyone. However, it's best to think about the appropriate time and place for reading your work to a group. Consider the audience's attention span when they're being read to. If you read to them, make sure the passage is either funny or directly reinforces the “take home” message. If you **must** read to a group, a best practice is to explain what you hope the audience will gain from the passage prior to reading it aloud.

**3. Know your audience.** Consider what the audience expects to learn from your presentation. Is this topic a general overview of what to expect when you're ready to submit to an agent or do they expect to learn the intricate details of an in-depth subject like point of view or character archetypes? Present to that expectation.

**4. Practice your presentation.** Unless you are a in the habit of presenting frequently, chances are, butterflies will form and fly around in your belly at the thought of standing up in front of a group. However, if you practice your presentation, both alone and in front of people, you'll get a good feel for the presentations pace, and anticipate (and prepare answers for) potential questions that may arise. Remember, you are teaching not impressing people with your in depth knowledge of a subject matter. Another rule of thumb is to speak more slowly than your normal pace – it helps people follow along and also adds a bit of suspense for what's coming next.

## My Life as a Date/My Life as a Writer

By Shirley Goldberg, CTRWA Member

WRITING AND DATING have more in common than you'd think. I know because they're both such a part of my life that I can't have one without the other. I'll be on a date accumulating details in my mind to mull over and write about later. How he cuts up his food like a kid, talks down to the waiter or needs enhancements to enjoy—you guessed it—sex. No, I'm not making this up.

There was a First Meet sporting a wedding band, for example. "I thought you were separated," I said. "Oh," he assured me. "I'm as separated as you can get."

Here are a few of the parallels I've discovered in the worlds of publishing and dating. You don't need to be an expert in either field to appreciate the similarities. They are offered nevertheless for amusement and as mini-studies in behavior.

- You've sent a query letter to three or four agents describing your book, plus the first three chapters so they can get a taste of your writing. One telephones you, asking for the complete manuscript. You are thrilled and get busy photocopying.
- You've gone on three or four meets with different guys. One telephones you and invites you to dinner. You are thrilled and get busy picking out something sleeveless that

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**5. Enjoy your presentation.** If you enjoy your presentation, your audience will enjoy it too. If you audience enjoys the presentation, they will remember the message. Smile, have fun, crack a joke or two (clean ones, of course) and engage your audience as much as possible. Group discussions do have their place over question and answer sessions to wrap up a presentation. Use audience participation where you can fit it in. If the audience feels they have skin in the game, they will be more likely to give you their undivided attention throughout the entire presentation. And, if they enjoy themselves, you'll get and keep their attention every time you speak.

So, now that you've been educated in giving effective presentations – the next step is to dive right in. Contact the chapter's Vice President and get on the schedule to speak at a craft corner or as a featured speaker. Don't say you don't have anything to contribute. Everyone is secretly a guru of something. And, if you need help preparing your presentation don't hesitate to contact me at [jenniferafusco@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferafusco@gmail.com). Go ahead, CTRWA – you're armed and ready now – *get on with it*.

# Learning to Read Like a Writer

by Sarah Winn

ONE OF THE early pieces of advice I received about learning to write was, “Read, read, read.” So I did. But after years of reading, I still didn’t know how to write, because I had been reading like a reader. I had to learn how to read like a writer.

My first step in this process was to start reading books that weren’t on anybody’s cannons of literature or current best seller lists; in other words, pop fiction. Some of these books I liked a lot, others not so much. I began to wonder why I could get totally lost in some books and in others run into speed bumps that jarred me out of the story. When I consciously looked for reasons I did not like books, I found distractions that ranged from little things like diction or syntax to big things like illogical plots or characters. Once I could see what was wrong in some books, I set my sights on discerning what was right about the books I liked.

Another necessary step in this learning to read process was to actually write myself. I had to discover what was difficult in my own writing before I could fully appreciate what was well done by another writer. The subtleties of foreshadowing or character arcs; the techniques of pacing action or developing rhythm within sentences and paragraphs are things that add to a reader’s enjoyment, but only the most discerning reader is actually aware of them.

I reached the point I’ve heard other writers complain about, that of not enjoying reading quite as much as I once had because my interest in techniques distracted me from the story. But I’m happy to report there was a silver lining to this predicament. I reached the point where looking for writing technique added to my enjoyment. Reading became a treasure hunt. Finding beautiful phrasing or original metaphors, unique plot twists or characterizations, or outstanding stylistic techniques added to my appreciation of a fellow writer. Being able to recognize true writing skill fed my own self-confidence.

Here’s a practical tip on reading like a writer. I keep Post-it® page markers and a pencil handy while I read. When I come to something I find interesting, I tab the page with a colorful little sticker and put a light pencil mark in the margin of the page or even at the beginning and end of the selected passage. Then I quickly go back to the story. I’ve even written clues on the page marker about why I had marked this particular passage. I learned from bitter experience not to think I could go back and find the interesting line if I didn’t mark it.

Another thing I occasionally do is re-read for a specific characteristic. Looking for variation in sentence structure, I used a bookmark to go down pages line by

line, not actually reading, but looking for differences in sentence length and composition. As a bonus, I began to see a lot of variation between authors’ use of punctuation. I’m now aware of colons and semicolons that I did not see in the past.

A final tool I have is a book diary. I started this because I wanted to remember what I had read, if I liked it, and why. I made brief notes about the plot to aid my memory, and then I started making notes about outstanding style characteristics. Did the author do anything unusual with POV treatment or person or tense or dialogue or flashbacks? The more I do this, the more I appreciate the great variety of techniques that exist in writing. I’ve learned a lot about writing, since I’ve learned to read like a writer.

*You can learn about Sarah Winn’s writing at [www.SarahWinn.com](http://www.SarahWinn.com). This article appeared in the September issue of the newsletter for the Heart of Carolina Romance Writers.*

## A Non-Fiction Book's in There Somewhere Part I: Organize Research Materials

By Joy Smith, CTRWA Member

WRITE ANY BOOK, especially a non-fiction one, is a mammoth undertaking. Heaps of ripped out magazine articles, web page printouts, books spewing neon sticky-notes, pads of scrawled out thoughts, and a file drawer’s worth of chapter starts and outlines can drive a writer into enough of a frenzy to gather the mess and haul it out to the trashcan. Hold it—you can turn those piles of data into the book you want them to be. All it takes is some productive thinking time, a good filing system, and periodic fits of organization.

*Getting Started:* A non-fiction book may not have a plot, but the information needs to be communicated in a logical order. If you have a book idea, you also have a feel for the topics that might be included. Begin by brainstorming. Write down everything you want to cover, and then rearrange your ideas into topics and subtopics to develop a working outline. Now, write a brief introduction that covers the book’s premise and how it will benefit the reader, and make up a working title.

*On Your Computer:* Create a computer folder and label it with your working title. For example, my working title for a book about cooking was “The Stomach Grows.” Its folder on my computer was called “Grows.” This folder will hold all

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Book in There, *continued from previous page*

files relating to this particular book, including research files, a bibliography, and all created and discarded versions of the book.

Next, create a single file, also labeled with the working title. This file will ultimately become the entire book text. Some folks prefer to use a separate file for each chapter or section, but I find this makes moving data around cumbersome, as it requires opening and closing files. Having a single book file also facilitates document searches and permits one-time set up for fonts, headings, and general formatting (and is often preferred by publishers.)

*In your File Cabinet:* Make up a physical hanging folder for each main topic using your working outline as a base for file labels. Use manila file folders to separate subtopics. For example, a section on Cold Storage might include files for various types of cold storage-- such as portable, non-portable, or built-ins. Set up your system in a file drawer, a portable file box, or a cardboard carton. You will be adding sections as you go along.

*Data Collection and Management:* Collecting information is integral part of developing any topic. Researching a subject breeds new ideas and broadens your perspective. Every magazine, every newspaper, every book, every person you speak with about your subject will have something to offer. Jot it down, rip it out, mark it, record it-- but don't lose the information. Pay attention to what others are writing about your topic; note the types of information included and how it's arranged.

*Tackle the Piles:* Begin by sorting the clippings and notes you've amassed into piles by subject. Lay these out on a large table or on the floor. Now, store each pile into its appropriate folder, those created from your working outline. Add folders for new topics or for those you want to sub divide, and then update your computer outline to include the changes. Leave books and magazines stacked in a corner somewhere. Mark the page holding the information with a Post It and either jot down the subject on each tab or color code by topic.

*Control the IN Box:* It would be wonderful if we had the time to file as we go, but this seldom happens. What I found works best is tossing everything into a designated IN box. When the stack spills over, file everything away. The job will be done quicker than you'd expect and your box will be cleared for continued accumulations. Should you be collecting information for several books, use the same IN box, but keep the file systems for each book separate.

Done all this? Now you're set to begin writing. Learn how to put your research materials into action in next month's newsletter.

*Joy Smith is the author of The Perfect First Mate, Kitchen Afloat, and the Empty Nest Cookbook, as well as numerous nautical articles. Contact her via her website [www.joysmith.net](http://www.joysmith.net).*

Writing & Dating, *continued*

goes with your new jeans.

- One agent wants an exclusive read. You say it's impossible, knowing she could sit on it for six months and do nothing. This is not normal protocol.
- One guy, after the second date, wants you to take your profile off the dating site and be exclusive. You say it's impossible, knowing this is moving way too fast to be just plain normal.
- The agent reads your manuscript and wants to represent you.
- The date really likes you so he phones to ask you out again.
- Your agent suggests some editing and rewriting to strengthen the manuscript and make it more appealing to editors.
- Your date lists his plan to take you to the new Asian-French fusion restaurant, with a stop on the way for a glass of wine at a new Spanish bistro. This plan is appealing.
- Your agent is organized, articulate, and encouraging. You know you'll do your best work if she represents you.
- Your date is casual, friendly, and clearly interested in getting to know you. You're at your best in his company.
- Your agent loves your book, so she phones in her enthusiasm, thus seducing editors at big publishing houses so they'll fork over big bucks for advertising.
- Your date really likes you, so he keeps phoning and taking you places you'll enjoy, hoping one day to seduce you.
- Your agent outlines the publishers she'll pitch your book to and the plan for revisions.
- Your date wants to go exclusive. He tells you about some of his plans for the future. He has no plans, however, to revise you in any way.

*Shirley Goldberg spent years researching her novel using live males on the hoof as her subjects. She believes that comedian Chris Rock had it right when he said that on the first few dates, men send their representative instead of making a personal appearance--resulting in good behavior, at least for a short time. The ways people behave and misbehave continue to fascinate her so she's at work on her second novel titled Eat Your Heart Out. It's written from both the female and male POV. She teaches English as a Second Language in New Haven.*



**Pointless But Fun**

Aside from writer, what's your dream job?

I'd go back to my earlier career of teaching college English (yanno, if you can't do, teach). One of my former students is now editor of The New Yorker, so I guess at least I wasn't destroying their love of the language...Bill Clark

Snowboard instructor to children. —Marian Lanouette

A Certified Nutritionist/Dietitian. What we eat does make a difference not only in our own health but the over all health care in this nation. — Marie Roy

Top-billed Broadway performer. —Jennifer Iszkiewicz

Taster at a pastry shop. Obviously. —Kristan Higgins

Already doing it: writing and doing the horse magazine. Being paid for it would be nice, though. —Rhonda Lane

I would love to work as a spy. It combines two of my favorite things, traveling and learning new languages. —Paula Robinson

Already have my dream job: Therapeutic recreation director—Candace Hall

If I wasn't a writer, I'd like to be a makeup artist or have my own makeup line. —Kate Smith

Since I've had 41 jobs, ranging from dishwasher to forktruck driver, teacher to EMT, amusement park worker and pretend crash victim, I really can't even guess what my dream job would be.—Kelly Morse

Writing songs. Music or lyrics, I don't care, either would do as long as I a) make lots of money and b) make people happy (or sad, as the situation demands).—Susan Andrews.

Homicide detective. —Jennifer Fusco

Editor at Harlequin was the best job ever. Even though I had to live in an apartment where the only way to get to the kitchen was to crawl across the bed which took up the entire room. —Huntley Fitzpatrick

I'm intrigued by furniture design. It combines function with artistic beauty, easily rearranged to create new tableaux when desired. Something loftier than Bob's. ("C'mon down!"). — Margery Reynolds

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“Now show show me the magic, Albert. Show me the magic.”

—Alex Hitchens (Will Smith) to Albert Brennaman (Kevin James), *Hitch*



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